

**Draft Summary of the Environmental Work Group Meeting  
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)  
March 20, 2001**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted the Environmental Work Group meeting on March 20, 2001 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary of the discussion for information purposes for interested parties who could not attend the meeting.

### **Introduction**

Attendees were welcomed to the Environmental Work Group meeting. The meeting objectives were discussed. The Environmental Work Group meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees and their affiliations are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. Flip chart notes taken during the meeting are included as Attachment 3.

### **Action Items – February 27, 2001 Environmental Work Group Meeting**

The facilitator reviewed the status of action items from the previous Environmental Work Group meeting.

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Action Item #E11:</b><br>Status: | Request the Plenary Group set a due date for IIP comments/corrections.<br>Plenary Group set April 30, 2001 as the deadline for IIP comments/corrections submittal to DWR.  |
| <b>Action Item #E12:</b><br>Status: | Identify potential studies to take advantage of 2000-2001 hydrologic conditions.<br>DWR responded that this request was made predicated on a very low hydrologic cycle this year. The February rains have brought the rain and snow totals closer to normal so specific drought studies are not being considered at this time. The request has been incorporated into some of our on-going studies. If dry-year studies are considered, the Environmental Work Group will be fully engaged in the process. |
| <b>Action Item #E13:</b><br>Status: | Provide links at the Oroville Facilities Relicensing web site to participating agency web sites for their guidelines and mandates.<br>Links are being added to the web site as they are being identified. The Environmental Work Group should continue to provide new potential links.   |
| <b>Action Item #E14:</b><br>Status: | Distribute Master Issues List to the Environmental Work Group.<br>Completed.   |
| <b>Action Item #E15:</b><br>Status: | Provide comments on IIP to DWR.<br>Comments on the IIP will be accepted throughout the process. The deadline for inclusion in the errata sheet is April 30, 2001   |
| <b>Action Item #E16:</b><br>Status: | DWR to provide draft Errata for IIP to the Environmental Work Group by mid-April.<br>Per the Plenary Groups direction, the deadline has been shifted to mid-May.   |

### **IIP Errata Update/Schedule Revisions**

Wayne Dyok of the consulting team discussed the most recent version of the draft schedule outlining critical paths to develop issue statements and the draft Scoping Document; he also discussed schedule linkages related to the Environmental Work Group meetings for the next 8 to 12 months. He reported the Plenary Group decision to delay distribution of the draft Scoping Document from mid-May to early July, allowing the Work Groups more time to develop issue statements for inclusion in the draft Scoping Document.

Wayne reminded the Environmental Work Group of their role in developing the issue statements, indicating that it would take approximately 4 to 6 meetings to prepare the final Scoping Document. He added that study plans will be finished before the end of the year, and pre-study preparations

could occur during the winter. He added that the goal of beginning field studies early in 2002 had not been significantly altered by the recent changes to the schedule. The revised draft schedule will be presented to the Plenary Group at their next meeting. When approved, the revised schedule will be distributed to all Work Group members and posted on the Oroville Facilities Relicensing web site.

In response to changes in the schedule the Environmental Work Group agreed to the following meeting dates: April 18, May 23, June 27, July 25, August 22, September 26, and October 24.

Wayne added that as the Environmental Work Group prepared the Scoping Document and Study Plans, they would be updated on the progress of on-going studies (e.g. - Rotary Screw Trap Sampling and Spawning Escapement Survey).

- Sharon Stohrer of the State Water Resources Control Board expressed concern that geomorphology and hydrology studies were being fragmented into other Work Groups and should be kept within the Environmental Work Group. Steve Ford of DWR suggested that hydrologic studies remain with the Engineering and Operations Work Group since they are tasked with developing the hydrologic model. He agreed that flow data from the models will be critical to a number of environmental studies and needs to be carefully integrated into the Environmental Work Group's activities. He suggested that Geomorphology (excluding seismic studies) stay with the Environmental Work Group. Seismic studies are critical to safety analysis and should be handled by the Engineering and Operations Work Group. The Environmental Work Group agreed that coordination between the two Work Groups would be essential to the success of the study effort. The Environmental Work Group agreed to propose a joint Task Force with the Engineering and Operations Work Group to help coordinate the efforts regarding hydrology and geomorphology. DWR agreed to author a Joint Task Force proposal between the two Work Groups regarding disposition of geomorphology and hydrologic issues, integration with modeling efforts, and general issue tracking procedures.

## **Endangered Species Act (ESA) Consultation Update**

### *FERC Relicensing Consultations*

Mike Morse of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) updated the Environmental Work Group on ESA consultations regarding relicensing the Oroville Facilities. He proposed that DWR, FWS, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and Department of Fish & Game (DFG) meet to identify ways to approach the technical aspects of implementing ESA within the collaborative process being used for relicensing the Oroville Facilities. Once the agencies have met, FWS will prepare a presentation for the Environmental Work Group. The presentation will include: information on the listed species most likely to be encountered, pathway to Section 7 consultations, and an approach to implementing ESA in the collaborative process. Mike added that there are new Federal guidelines regarding ESA implementation for FERC relicensing, which may be useful in this process. Mike stated that the goal is to have active public input into the ESA consultation during the collaborative process.

FWS completed their issue document for the Oroville Facilities relicensing and distributed copies to the Environmental Work Group. FWS described the document as 'broad brush' and containing FWS goals to help focus later issue discussions. The document is appended to this summary as Attachment 4. DWR agreed to distribute the document electronically to the Environmental Work Group and to post the document on the Oroville Facilities relicensing web site as part of the meeting summary.

### *On-going ESA Consultation*

At the last Environmental Work Group meeting, Steve Ford of DWR reported that NMFS had nearly completed its Draft Biological Opinion (BO) on State Water Project and Central Valley Project operations effects on steelhead and spring-run salmon between March 2001 to March 2002. . The

consultation is being conducted under the Section 7 with the US Bureau of Reclamation as the lead. Steve had intended to request USBR to set up a stakeholder briefing on the draft B.O. However, USBR subsequently

requested that NMFS go final with their BO without issuing a draft. USBR was concerned about legal actions against some of their water contracts if the BO was not in place.

Steve indicated the Environmental Work Group would need to consider how to coordinate the consultations on current operations with consultations for the relicensing process. He noted that the outcome of the former has the potential to directly affect the “baseline” of the latter. FWS added that the relicensing process should be seen as a separate activity with information from the existing BOs feeding into the process.

- The Environmental Work Group requested that BOs and Biological Assessments (BAs) from other similar FERC processes be made available.

### **Rules and Responsibilities in FERC Relicensing**

Representatives from local Tribes and the Bureau of Land Management requested that their presentations be postponed to the next Environmental Work Group meeting.

### **Environmental Task Force Report**

#### *Revisions to Issue Statements*

Wayne Dyok reported that the Environmental Task Force had reviewed and provided comment on the list of issue statements developed by the consulting team. The revised issue statement list was distributed to the Environmental Work Group and is appended to this summary as Attachment 5. The Environmental Work Group reviewed the list and refined the wording of specific statements and added some additional issues. Revisions or additions to issue statements proposed are included in the Flip-Chart notes as Attachment 3.

#### *Issue Sheet Development*

Wayne Dyok reported that the Task Force would meet again on April 9. It was suggested that it draft Issue Sheets based on the revised issue statements provided by the Environmental Work Group. The Environmental Work Group agreed and requested that the draft Issue Sheets be presented to the Environmental Work Group for review and comment at their next meeting. Steve Ford added that all Environmental Work Group members are welcome to participate in the Task Force.

### **Other Issues**

Sharon Stohrer of the SWRCB made two process-oriented requests:

- Drafts to the Environmental Work Group (and Plenary Group) for review and comment should be distributed at least 7 to 10 days before the meeting where they will be discussed.
- Start the subject line for all Oroville Facilities Relicensing-related e-mails with “Oroville Relicensing”.

### **Homework**

The Environmental Work Group was reminded that IIP errata comments are due to DWR no later than April 30<sup>th</sup>. Comments can be e-mailed to Rick Ramirez at [ramirez@water.ca.gov](mailto:ramirez@water.ca.gov).

### **Next Meeting**

The Environmental Work Group discussed their long-term meeting schedule as it relates to the Scoping Document, and developing Study Plans and agreed to meet again on April 18, 2001 from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. Meeting location to be announced.

### **Agreements Made**

1. The Environmental Work Group agreed to provide comments on the IIP to DWR staff before April 30, 2001.
2. The Environmental Work Group agreed to review Issue Sheets developed by the Environmental Task Force and consulting team at their April meeting.
3. The Environmental Work Group agreed to the following regarding geomorphology and hydrology issues:
  - Engineering and Operations Work Group will address hydrology and seismic issues; coordinate with Environmental Work Group on hydrologic modeling issues and data needs;
  - Most of the geomorphology issues should be addressed by the Environmental Work Group
  - A Joint Task Force between the Environmental and the Engineering and Operations Work Groups will be proposed to identify issues and responsibilities regarding geomorphology and hydrology
  - A tracking system will be developed providing “checks and balances” for issues.
4. The Environmental Work Group agreed to meet again on April 18, 2001 from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM (location to be announced).

### **Action Items**

The following list of action items identified by the Environmental Work Group includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and item status.

<b>Action Item #E17:</b>	Fish & Wildlife Service presentation on ESA Species and Process Issues to the Environmental Work Group
<b>Responsible:</b>	US Fish & Wildlife Service
<b>Due Date:</b>	Pending completion of interagency meeting
<b>Action Item #E18:</b>	Provide web sites for electronic copies or hard copies of Biological Opinions and Biological Assessments relevant to the FERC process to the document repository.
<b>Responsible:</b>	DWR and the Consulting Team
<b>Due Date:</b>	April 18, 2001
<b>Action Item #E19:</b>	Consulting team will revise issue statements based on comments received and reference each statement to the full list of identified issues, to be included as appendix in Scoping Document
<b>Responsible:</b>	Consulting Team and DWR
<b>Due Date:</b>	April 18, 2001
<b>Action Item #E20:</b>	Start subject line for all Oroville Facilities Relicensing-related e-mails with “Oroville Relicensing”.
<b>Responsible:</b>	DWR, Consulting Team, and Environmental Work Group Participants
<b>Due Date:</b>	On-going
<b>Action Item #E21:</b>	Distribute documents for review to appropriate Environmental Work Group participants at least 7 days prior to the meeting
<b>Responsible:</b>	DWR, Consulting Team
<b>Due Date:</b>	On-going
<b>Action Item #E22:</b>	DWR to author a Joint Task Force proposal between the Environmental and Engineering and Operations Work Groups regarding disposition of geomorphology and hydrologic issues, integration with modeling efforts, and general issue tracking procedures.
<b>Responsible:</b>	DWR

**Due Date:** April 18, 2001